

CN 7288

TELEGRAM

051544Z SEP 79

INDICATE
☐ COLLECT
☐ CHARGE TOTBF
F:1

(4)(a)

	FROM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES	CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL	Turnman
12065 E.O. 11652 TAGS: SUBJECT:	GDS 9/5/85 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND B.) OR-P OVIP SHUM AR US (U) WIESEL DOES NOT SEE TIMERMAN		
ACTION:	SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE		
AMB DCM POL 3 ECOM POL/R DAO ICA CHRON	C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES ~~728~~ 7288 REF: BUENOS AIRES 7262 1. C - ENTIRE TEXT. 2. ELI WIESEL LEFT BUENOS AIRES WITHOUT SEEING JACOBO TIMERMAN, DESPITE ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL VIOLA'S AUTHORIZATION TO THE AMBASSADOR OF SUCH A VISIT (REFTEL). GENERAL VIOLA'S AUTHORIZATION WAS FOLLOWED BY A PHONE CALL TO THE AMBASSADOR FROM ARMY SECRETARY GENERAL BIGNONE, WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING BETWEEN VIOLA AND THE AMBASSADOR, STATING THAT THE VISIT HAD BEEN SET UP AND ALL THE EMBASSY HAD TO DO WAS TO CONTACT THE INTERIOR MINISTRY TO MAKE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS. (TIMERMAN'S HOUSE ARREST IS SUPERVISED BY THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR.) THE EMBASSY TRIED REPEATEDLY TO CONTACT COL. RUIZ PALACIOS, DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR, WHOSE SECRETARY INFORMED HIM OF THE PURPOSE OF OUR CALL. COL. PALACIOS WAS "OUT"		

DRAFTED BY POL:TB Friedman:SZ	DRAFTING DATE 9/5/79	TEL EXT 278	CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY POLCOUNS:WHHALLMAN
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DCM:MCHAPLIN

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CLASSIFICATION

50153-101

OPTIONAL FORM 153
(Formerly FS-413)
January 1975
Dept of State

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OR "IN A MEETING" AND NEVER RETURNED OUR CALLS. SIMILARLY 7
 WE ATTEMPTED TO SPEAK WITH COL. SAN ROMAN, A FREQUENT
 INTERIOR MINISTRY CONTACT AND MEMBER OF RUIZ PALACIOS'
 STAFF. SAN ROMAN WAS ALSO OUT AND NEVER RETURNED OUR
 PHONE CALLS. FINALLY, WE TRIED TO SPEAK WITH INTERIOR
 MINISTER HARGUINDEGUY WHO WAS OUT OF TOWN. WHEN IT
 APPEARED THAT WE WERE GOING TO HAVE TROUBLE COMPLETING
 ARRANGEMENTS WE AGAIN CONTACTED GENERAL BIGNONE AND
 WERE TOLD ONCE AGAIN ALL HAD BEEN ARRANGED AND ALL WE
 HAD TO DO WAS CONTACT THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR. IN
 THE END WIESEL, WHO WAS AWARE OF OUR EFFORTS IN HIS
 BEHALF, LEFT TOWN DISAPPOINTED AND ANGERED BY THIS
 DEVELOPMENT.

3. COMMENT: THERE ARE THREE POSSIBLE BROAD EXPLANATIONS
 OF THIS PERFORMANCE BY THE GOA:

- (A) A BUREAUCRATIC SNAFU;
- (B) MINISTER HARGUINDEGUY, WHO ORIGINALLY DENIED WIESEL'S
 REQUEST TO VISIT TIMERMAN, OBSTRUCTED VIOLA'S ATTEMPT
 TO OVERRULE HIM;

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(C) THERE WAS SOME SORT OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN VIOLA
 AND HARGUINDEGUY WHICH AUTHORIZED THE MINISTER AND HIS
 SUBORDINATES TO PROCEED EXACTLY AS THEY DID.

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THE FIRST EXPLANATION SEEMS TO US ~~TO BE THE MOST PLAUSIBLE~~
 IMPLAUSIBLE IN THIS CASE, THOUGH IT MAY BE THE ONE
 EVENTUALLY HEARD FROM THE GOA. THE OTHER TWO
 SCENARIOS ARE PLAUSIBLE BUT IT WOULD SIMPLY BE GUESS-
 WORK TO SAY WHICH MORE CLOSELY CORRESPONDS TO THE EVENTS.

~~THAT TRANSCRIBED~~

4. WIESEL TOLD THE PRESS ON DEPARTING BUENOS AIRES THAT
 HE WOULD BE MAKING A FULL STATEMENT ABOUT THIS ABORTED
 INTERVIEW IN NEW YORK. IF THE DEPARTMENT IS QUERIED
 ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENTS OUTLINED ABOVE RECOMMEND THAT IT
 CONFIRM THE EMBASSY EFFORTS TO ARRANGE THE WIESEL/
 TIMERMAN INTERVIEW BUT ~~NOT SPECULATE ON THE REASON~~
~~WHY THE MEETING NEVER CAME OFF~~ ~~LIMITING ITSELF TO~~
~~STATE THAT WE WERE UNABLE TO COMPLETE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS.~~

CASTRO *me*

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 - possible Refry?

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(U) Elie Weisel (pronounced why-ZELL, Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust) has expressed his intention of visiting Argentina in late August to raise the Timmerman case with GOA officials. The Commission on the Holocaust was established in 1978 for the purpose of advising the President or establishing an appropriate memorial in the United States to the victims of the Holocaust. The Commission will submit its recommendations and they will include the establishment of a museum display, an educational center with computer link-ups to other centers concerned with the Holocaust, and the creation of a Committee of Conscience of apolitical and respected public figures to advise the President and Congress on situations of potential genocide in the future (such as the plight of the "boat people" in Southeast Asia).

(U) Elie Weisel is an Andrew Mellon Professor of Humanities at Boston University. He is a survivor of the holocaust (interned at Auschwitz) and became an American citizen in 1958. He has written 19 books on philosophical subjects.

(LOU) Weisel shares the concern of many Americans over the detention of Jacobo Timerman. He would like to intervene with GOA officials and press for Timerman's release and would plan to visit in late August. S/S originally called us about this visit and urged that we be as helpful as possible to Weisel. While we all agree on the importance of the Timerman case, and its political sensitivities, John Bushnell has expressed his concern, however, that we may be pressing these approaches to the GOA on Timerman to the point where they adversely affect our ability to get Argentine action on other high-interest cases. John felt that Weisel could properly visit Argentina on the Timerman case, but that he should not travel in a quasi-official status as Chairman of the Commission on the Holocaust but rather as a respected American citizen. John also suggested that the Jewish community in Argentina might be encouraged to take a hand in arranging calls on the GOA and other key contacts. We will approach the visit from this point of view here in the Department, down-playing a direct U.S. role, but would appreciate at the same time your views on the Weisel visit.

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MASSIVE
 with can visit when
 in the cabinet or
 visit - sketch for
 6 Aug 79